

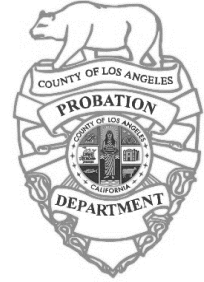


ADOLFO GONZALES

Chief Probation Officer


COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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September 20, 2022

TO: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Adolfo Gonzales 
Chief Probation Officer

SUBJECT: **ALIGNING THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT'S HIRING PRACTICES
WITH YOUTH JUSTICE REIMAGINED (READ-IN MOTION, AGENDA OF
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022)**

On September 13, 2022, on motion of Supervisor Mitchell, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Chief Probation Officer to:

- a. Report back in writing in 7 days on why his ability to seek authorization from the Chief Executive Officer to hire additional staff under the hiring freeze policy is not a sufficient remedy to the Probation Department's Juvenile Division's staffing needs.
- b. Collaborate with the Interim Director of the Department of Youth Development (DYD), in consultation with County Counsel, Director of the Department of Human Resources, and other relevant stakeholders, to report back to the Board in writing in 7 days with recommendations on a hiring process that meaningfully includes the DYD, as allowed by State law and County Civil Service Rules, for the purpose of ensuring that future hiring decisions and practices in the Probation Department's Juvenile Division are consistent with and build on progress towards the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined.

Hiring Additional Staff Under the Hiring Freeze

The Juvenile Institutions Services (JIS) hiring freeze is applicable to all positions within this JIS budget unit, not just Peace Officer positions, which impacts sworn and

Rebuild Lives and Provide for Healthier and Safer Communities

professional staffing needs throughout the department. Our professional staff (e.g., clerical, analysts, secretaries, dispatchers, etc.) are vital to the effective functioning and support of JIS services. JIS also includes Transportation Deputies (who are Peace Officers) crucial to the movement of youth to and from our facilities, home, court, placement, health and mental health care, and community-based providers. In addition, JIS positions include Deputy Probation Officers who are the backbone of our Camp Community Transition Program (CCTP) which are the people who collaborate with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and others to prepare youth to return home, CCTP DPOs are the driving force pushing for rapid school enrollment and ensuring community-based therapies are scheduled to provide essential tailored needs for a camp youth's successful assimilation back to his/her community.

As the Board's motion notes, Probation has recently been provided with an exception to fill 150 JIS positions. The 150 positions are a down payment, not a comprehensive solution, toward restoring juvenile hall child supervision effectiveness to a level that heightens safety and security. Allowing the Department to expeditiously hire without restrictions via the lifting of the JIS hiring freeze is necessary if we are to obtain optimal function of the juvenile halls and not only meet our obligations under the law but provide a culture, space, and programming where our youth can thrive while under our supervision.

Probation has been working closely with CEO to justify hiring of certain positions under the freeze. This requires that our Human Resources team prepare exception requests and supporting documentation for submission to CEO. Then we must prepare and submit a fact sheet for internal review and subsequent review by DHR and CEO. CEO then must brief the BOS Chief Deputies on the Department's staffing and hiring needs. Then final review and approval by the CEO of the exception requests. This process can take several months which adds to an already long Civil Service process to hire staff, both sworn and professional. Over the past several months, we have lost potential candidates due to the length of this process.

Hiring for the JIS budget unit is imperative to ensure the Department's complete and successful compliance with the implementation of the California Department of Justice Juvenile Halls settlement agreement, and not only meet compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) staff-to-youth supervision ratios but all regulations mandated by Title 15 regulations overseen by the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Probation's current staffing crisis jeopardizes compliance with BSCC regulations and adherence to the provisions of the California DOJ settlement agreement. Lifting the hiring freeze will allow us to address attrition and fill urgent positions in a timely manner which will allow us to be compliant with BSCC, and a growing population of youth returning from State facilities or who previously would have been sent to State facilities but now stay within Probation's care.

Emerging best practices, and national standards such as the Prison Rape Elimination Act, support the need for comprehensive youth supervision levels. Safety dictates that Probation cannot stop hiring while it is responsible for maintaining supervision and mandated staffing ratios for juvenile hall youth.

Promotional Hiring Continuum

Freezing juvenile hall hiring obstructs the promotional hiring continuum which strains camps' ability to staff effectively, and squeezes Field Services caseloads so client oversight is less frequent and less effective. It is our field staff who provide vital linkages to clients' service needs such as housing, substance abuse treatment, food insecurity, employment, family reunification, restorative care, and community safety.

Maintaining a regular flow of incoming entry-level positions is critical for the entire department staffing model. The department must not only fill existing critically low entry level vacancies, but also forecast and create a pool of internal candidates for promotional position needs. Approximately 75 to 99% of candidates for the next level sworn position, DPO I, come from the entry-level juvenile division ranks. Historically all sworn positions above DPO I (approx. 98%) are from internal promotions.

Mandated staffing ratios in our juvenile facilities force delays to staff movement from the lower levels into other sworn positions until a backfill candidate to replace the promoting candidate is identified, impacting promotional movement, and staffing throughout the department.

When the hiring freeze went into effect, the entry level sworn background process stopped, further delaying the hiring process. The process has historically been approximately 60-120 days from the time candidates receive a conditional offer to begin the background process. Probation is working closely with DHR to significantly decrease this timeline by making modifications to the process and eliminating the polygraph examination. Any additional delays significantly impact the ability to promptly hire new entry level staff, as well as promote any Deputy Probation Officers and higher level sworn position and Supervisors as previously outlined.

Aligning Probation's Hiring Practices with Youth Justice Reimagined

To ensure that future hiring decisions and practices in the Probation Department are consistent with and build on progress towards the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR), Probation will establish a workgroup with the Department of Youth Development (DYD), CEO, and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to implement the following:

- In partnership with DYD, CEO – Classification, and DHR, Probation will develop a list of desirable knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) that align with the YJR to be incorporated into all future recruitment of Probation staff.
- Work with DYD, CEO classification, and DHR to evaluate the existing Department classifications to align with YJR. Minimum qualifications will also be reviewed and aligned with YJR.
- Increase recruitment efforts and partner with DYD to broaden recruitment pipelines to attract candidates with the newly identified KSA's. Probation will work with DYD and DHR to develop recruitment content and analytics to ensure that we are reaching our desired candidates.
- Provide DYD the opportunity to review and provide feedback on future job bulletins and exam components for Juvenile Institutions Services hiring.
- Include DYD in our entry-level hiring interviews and promotional interviews. Probation has already modified our promotional interview process to include internal and external stakeholders. We have included staff from Alternatives to Incarceration, Youth Commissioners, Probation Oversight Commissioners (POC), and DHR in recent hiring interviews to elicit more diverse feedback.
- Partner with DYD and local universities to create internships that grant participants opportunities for mentorship and exposure to Probation's entry level career opportunities.
- Promote Probation's career opportunities on DYD's website, social media, press releases and any other events attended by DYD and/or DYD's partners (i.e., Community Based Organizations).
- Collaborate with DYD to review training courses and enhancements to current training to ensure alignment with the YJR objectives. Probation is shifting training practices to enhance curriculum focused on youth development and trauma-informed care.
- Expand Probation's Communication Plan to include joint communication strategies for Probation and DYD. Probation and DYD leadership will meet with Probation staff to answer questions about the shared goals of the two departments. Meetings will be scheduled with executive leadership, managers, supervisors, and line-level staff.

Probation, DYD, DHR, CEO-Classifications, and County Counsel will begin working immediately to align hiring practices with the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Adam Bettino, Chief Deputy, Administration and Operational Support, at (562) 940-3760 or adam.bettino@probation.lacounty.gov.

AG:AB

c: Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer
Vincent Holmes, Interim Director, Department of Youth Development
Lisa Garrett, Director, Department of Human Resources
Celia Zavala, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Dawyn R. Harrison, Acting County Counsel
Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Probation Oversight Commission
Justice Deputies



WENDELYN JULIEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

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MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
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JANICE HAHN
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September 21, 2022

TO: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Wendelyn Julien
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendelyn".

**SUBJECT: ALIGNING THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT'S HIRING PRACTICES
WITH YOUTH JUSTICE REIMAGINED (READ-IN MOTION, AGENDA OF
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022)**

On September 13, 2022, on motion of Supervisor Mitchell, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Executive Director of the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) to report back in writing in nine days with feedback on whether the hiring process recommendations developed by the Chief Probation Officer provide the Interim Director of the Department of Youth Development with a meaningful role in the hiring decisions for the Probation Department's Juvenile Division for the purpose of fulfilling the intent of Directive 2 of the motion.

Directive 2 of the motion instructed the Chief Probation Officer to collaborate with the Interim Director of the Department of Youth Development (DYD), in consultation with County Counsel, Director of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and other relevant stakeholders, to report back to the Board in writing in seven days with recommendations on a hiring process that meaningfully includes the DYD, as allowed by State law and County Civil Service Rules, for the purpose of ensuring that future hiring decisions and practices in the Probation Department's Juvenile Division are consistent with and build on progress towards the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined.

Feedback on Hiring Process Recommendations:

The Probation Department included the Executive Director of the POC in meetings with the Interim Director of the DYD and other relevant stakeholders and in the review of drafts of the recommendations. The process was inclusive and collaborative and the recommendations provide a meaningful role for DYD to participate in the Probation Department's future recruitment and hiring processes in a manner that promotes the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined and the Board's "Care First, Jails Last" vision.

The POC finds that the collaborative hiring process agreed to by Probation, DYD, and DHR supports the goals of Youth Justice Reimagined because it incorporates DYD and the vision of “Care First, Jails Last” at all relevant stages of the hiring process including:

- **Development of Job Descriptions and Evaluation of Classifications** – A key element to this process is the inclusion of DYD and the vision of Youth Justice Reimagined in the development of job descriptions and bulletins for the positions that Probation will hire in order to attract personnel who embody the County’s vision for care and rehabilitation in the current carceral settings and an eventual move away from a reliance on carceral settings for youth. Probation leadership have also expressed willingness and support for evaluating the classifications for new hires that will help attract applicants who embody these values.
- **Recruitment** – The process includes collaboration with DYD and DHR to determine strategies for recruitment. Given that DYD is currently recruiting staff for its newly funded positions, the POC is optimistic that DYD can use similar techniques to share Probation’s openings in order to increase recruitment of candidates who will demonstrate the newly agreed-upon knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and to support recruitment of candidates who reflect the demographics and life experiences of the people served by Probation.
- **Interviews and Hiring** – Probation agreed to include DYD staff in the interview process for its entry-level positions. Probation Oversight Commissioners have had the opportunity to participate in promotional interviews in the past and felt included and valued in the process. The POC encourages Probation to also incorporate DYD participants’ opinions in the hiring choices to ensure that DYD’s participation in the interviews is meaningful and not perfunctory.
- **Training** – While not specifically required by the motion, the collaboration between Probation, DYD and DHR and the resulting agreement also included promising discussions about the training of new staff to ensure that they receive a thorough introduction into the County’s vision for “Care First, Jails Last” and Youth Justice Reimagined. The inclusion of efforts to collaboratively train new staff suggests a deep understanding and willingness by each of the departments to ensure that new hires in Probation embody the overall goals of the County.

Please feel free to contact me at wjulien@poc.lacounty.gov with any questions.

WJ:jp

c: Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer
Adolfo Gonzales, Chief Probation Officer
Vincent Holmes, Interim Director, Department of Youth Development
Lisa Garrett, Director of Personnel
Celia Zavala, Executive Officer
Dawyn R. Harrison, Interim County Counsel
Justice Deputies, Board of Supervisors